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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Letter dated 17 July 2003 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like to draw your attention to the recent arbitrary and illegal actions of Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people. In this connection, I wish to refer to my letter addressed to you on 30 January 2003 concerning the question of the closing down by the Israeli authorities of two universities in Hebron.

You may recall that on 15 January 2003, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) closed down the Palestine Polytechnic University for six months as a security measure. In the process, IDF forces raided offices and laboratories, destroyed and confiscated property and welded shut university gates and doors.

On 11 July 2003, the University Administration received an Israeli army order extending the closure for another month. The Administration subsequently appealed to the United Nations Secretariat to intervene and use the good offices of the United Nations in order to lift the closure (see annex).

In this regard, allow me to restate the position of the Committee on this issue. The Committee views the issuance of the closure order as unacceptable and unjustified. It also represents a harsh form of collective punishment, depriving the Palestinian youth of their inherent right to education. Such measures are almost certain to deepen the mistrust between Palestinians and Israelis. In addition, at this extremely sensitive and critical stage, they are undermining the efforts at implementing the road map with a view to realizing a vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to express the hope that you would bring these urgent concerns to the attention of the competent organs of the United Nations, and that you would use your own good offices with the Government of Israel, so that the present situation could be redressed for the benefit of students and faculty of the University.

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I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Papa Louis **Fall**

Annex

Letter dated 14 July 2003 from the Administration of the Palestine Polytechnic University to the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat

We would like to inform you that the Israeli military occupation has closed the Palestine Polytechnic University (PPU) for six months, effective 15 January 2003. In this process, it has destroyed and confiscated much of the property and equipment of the various university campus locations. In addition, it welded shut the university's main gates and doors. This condemned military action violates relevant international laws, human rights and values.

We consider this closure as unjustified and illegal since it deprives over 2,500 students and 400 employees from their right to education. Further, it is an unprecedented breach to signed agreements since the PPU campus locations are under the control of the Palestinian Authority in Hebron.

PPU is a pioneering university, offering a wide range of technical and engineering programmes. We abide by national and international norms and regulations of higher education. The Israeli security claims behind this closure are unjustified and void.

We would like to inform you that on the evening of Friday, 11 July 2003, we received from the Israeli Army another order to extend the closure of PPU for another month; this will extend the period of closure to seven months.

The effect of this order on the students, the administration and the people has been devastating. At a time when all the people in the area are working for peace, the Israeli forces are escalating hostile measures against the Palestinians, especially against the new generation. This will spread anger and desperation in the hearts of the students and in the end will serve nobody.

As a United Nations body dedicated to the Palestinian rights, we appeal to you to use your good offices to lift this unjust military action imposed on us by force. We would highly appreciate it if you could use your power through the various United Nations agencies and departments to pressure the Israelis to revoke their oppressive military order.

Thank you for your kind attention; your intervention will definitely have a positive impact on helping our students and staff to go on with their educational life as normal human beings.